

MEDIASCAN TRANSCRIPT
CBS Face the Nation
22 May 1983
Sunday

Sen. Goldwater, General Wallace *Nuddig who is in charge of our troops in Central America, said that, like it or not, we are engaged in the war, the United States is engaged in the war that's going on down there, and he says we have not done what is required of us. What do you think? What is required of us and shall we do it or not? GOLDWATER (Chairman, Intelligence Committee): I think the first thing that's required is for the president to make a new statement of his position, which would be the country's position, on Central America. Now I think this is such an important part of our foreign policy that it's only become really important in the last two months, that if I were the president preparing this paper, I would say if it becomes necessary to save Central America, we will use our troops, our aircraft, our forces. It's that important. And as I say, it's only become that important lately, and I agree with General Nuddig. I read his report, and I think he's correct.

From CBS News, Washington, a spontaneous and unrehearsed news interview on Face the Nation with Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Sen. Goldwater will be questioned by CBS News congressional correspondent Phil Jones, by Elizabeth Drew of New Yorker Magazine and by the moderator, CBS News correspondent George Herman. Face the Nation is produced by CBS News, which is solely responsible for the selection of today's guest and panel.

HERMAN: Sen. Goldwater in your first answer you suggest that President Reagan state a policy of American, United States' willingness to go in with troops into El Salvador. That immediately brings up two questions, one military one political. Let me start on the military one first. You're an old time soldier, Army, Air Corp and Air Force. You remember the Armed Services Committee. What would it take, what would it cost the United States in terms of men and equipment, to go into a place like El Salvador where we might face an unfriendly populous who is not overly fond of Yankees? What would it take for us to go in and solve the problem, clean it up? GOLDWATER: I think the mere threat, if made in a strong way, if made in a way that people will believe, the mere threat would suffice. Now we've lived long enough in this country offering to help other countries and then not helping, failing to help, that our friends around the world very much believe that we're a paper tiger, that I think if the president made it abundantly clear that the Caribbean is our problem now, starting with Cuba, and we would use what forces necessary to maintain Central America, I have a strong feeling we would not have any further trouble. If we had trouble, it's very difficult to answer the question you've asked, because we really don't understand now, at least I don't, the number of plans that would be required, the number of troops or ships. I think we could start with a quarantine, for example, a ship quarantine to make it possible to completely stop supplies going into Nicaragua and San Salvador. We could use aircraft if that became necessary, and you have to keep in mind that they are just completing, I think, a 10,000 foot strip in Nicaragua, where the Russians can land their own equipment.

DREW: Sen. Goldwater, you said the president should make a new statement. He made a speech before Congress not very many weeks ago in which he said, among other things, 'We will never use.... We will not use American troops,' to which he got great applause. Do you think he should not have said that, or has the situation changed

dramatically since he did say that? GOLDWATER: Yes, the situation changed almost immediately.

DREW: Should he have not said that? GOLDWATER: No, I think he had the right to say that. He's the commander and chief, but I'm urging him now. Let me go back just a space. I'm chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and we passed a little doodad that told him that he has until the end of this fiscal year, October first or the end of September, to come up with a new statement, or he might have trouble getting more covert funds approved by us. And I think that he's in the process now of forming that statement. It will be a different statement, I hope.

JONES: Sen. Goldwater, what has occurred since the president made this statment that makes it so much more critical? GOLDWATER: I think we've finally begun to realize, and I'm not going to stand here and argue the truth or untruth of what I'm going to tell you, I think the Soviets have reached sort of a stalemate in Europe. They're facing tremendous forces in Red China. They're not doing well in Afghanastan. Yugoslavia has not made up their mind, and they have Poland to contend with, and that's quite a bit to contend with. Now, having reached an impasse over there, if I were a member of the Politburo or head of it, I'd be looking someplace else. And the natural place I would look would be Cuba and the Caribbean. That's a natural place for the Soviets to start moving equipment, troops and influence.

JONES: Well, are they? GOLDWATER: Yes. JONES: More in the last month or two? GOLDWATER: Well, we apprehended four aircraft just about a month ago, just after, I think, the day of the president's speech and they were Russian aircraft. They have the ability now to land in Nicaragua unless we prevent them from doing it. They have vast supplies in Cuba. Cuba is really the trouble spot down there, and I have often said, and not too facetiously, it would make a good 51st state.

JONES: Senator, one of your former colleagues, Jacob Javits, used to say during foreign policy debates, 'Great nations don't bluff.' Do you think the American people are ready to send American boys into Central America? GOLDWATER: Well, great nations do not bluff, and great nations don't go to war. Had we been ready to tell Hitler in the 1930s, 'You put a foot on the soil of this country and we're going to be at you,' there never would have been a World War II. Had we been willing to allow the military to use the forces we had in Vietnam, we would have won in Vietnam, the same in Korea. I think the American people are far, far ahead of what you hear around Washington. I travel out across this country, and I think the general consensus that I've come to is that the American people are ahead of us, that they're willing to take a chance to keep peace, and I think that by a strong statement relative to Central America, we can keep peace.

HERMAN: Do you think something is afoot there? I noticed that when your committee said until October first or until the end of September, somebody interviewed a guerrilla spokesman in Nicaragua or on the edge of Nicaragua, and he said, 'That's time enough because we'll be in Managua by that time.' Is this problem going to take care of itself without American, U.S. intervention? GOLDWATER: It can. Now we won't get into an argument like the words covert and overt.

HERMAN: I was sort of looking forward to that. GOLDWATER: We are pretty much overt now. Without that we can't operate overtly without really going to war. So I think we're beginning to make progress. I remember when that fellow made that statement, and up until that time, I'd say up until two weeks ago or even a month, we had no positive proof that our efforts were producing any good results. Now, we get almost

daily reports, not of a gigantic nature, but we are getting reports, encouraging reports that we are stopping the flow of arms. We are making headway, but again, the nature of the conflict down there being so diversified, it's hard to make a flat statement that we're winning. We might be here. We might not be here.

HERMAN: Let me ask you then, the October first date which your committee set, which you announced, is that engraved in stone, could you slip that a little bit if it seemed as though progress were being made and the situation might take care of itself? That's the cutoff point. GOLDWATER: The press if not too informed of how we operate. Our Intelligence Committee approves or disapproves everything, requests for covert action, whether it's made now, the next fiscal year or when. So whether we pass that little resolution or not, come October the first they would have to come back up and ask for approval or disapproval of covert action.

HERMAN: But you've announced the conditions. GOLDWATER: We've made.... Yes, we've announced some conditions. We might change that, but I have my doubts. The votes were there.

DREW: Senator, you've given us both an optimistic and pessimistic view, and I wonder what really reflects your thinking. One is you answered George by saying yes, the situation, at least in Nicaragua, might take care of itself, and you began by saying that you thought the situation was deteriorating, but maybe you meant El Salvador and that we might need to use troops. Could we just clarify which it is that you really think? GOLDWATER: I'm on the optimistic side now. A month ago I was a little more pessimistic, but I think that our covert action is beginning to take hold. We're beginning to get better reports, not just from Nicaragua, but from observers down there for that purpose.

DREW: Isn't it maybe time to drop the term covert? And we're all talking about it. We see it on television. Isn't it a little silly to keep that pretense up?

GOLDWATER: Yes, I'll agree with you. But here we have a problem.

HERMAN: Are you saying the president was silly when he said in the news conference that they could do covert activity, but they couldn't do overt because it was against the law? GOLDWATER: Well, I'm the one that said that. Just off hand, you violate nine different laws if you go overt. In fact, I think we're violating some right now. But to go overt, and there are ways to get around it, you can give aircraft, tanks, you can sell them to this country and swap around, but eventually it means war if you're going to maintain an overt position of helping this particular government in this particular country. And that's something we have to make up our minds before we finally pass an overt resolution. Even though I have to admit with television covering everything that's going on down there and newspapers covering everything that's going on, under the dictionary definition of overt and covert, it's overt action.

DREW: I'd like to ask you one more question. You said you're not entirely facetious when you suggest that Cuba should be a 51st state. Do you think we should invade Cuba? GOLDWATER: I think we should have.

DREW: What about now? GOLDWATER: I'm not opposed to it. If they continue to try to take over the entire Caribbean, try to Cubanize our friends in South America, I think if we want to have peace, long peace, you have to face up to these things. Now we don't like them. I don't like them. Anybody who's been to war can see that's par for

the course no more. But I want to prevent wars, and I think we're heading for trouble as long as Cuba can be a warehouse for Soviet arms and Soviet men and equipment.

HERMAN: Let me broaden your scope a little bit, Sen. Goldwater. Prevent wars theory has always been we have to have a good defense posture. Now we're engaged in a seemingly endless brouhaha over the defense budget. Is there enough money in it? Is there enough money in it as cut? What is your view of the defense budget? GOLDWATER: Well, if you want to look at it in an arithmetic way....

HERMAN: Well, I hope not to get bogged down in details, but.... GOLDWATER: No, I don't want to get bogged down in details, but I'll just tell you, we don't have enough money. If we spent it all on arms to match the Russians.... Let's forget that. We can strengthen ourselves more than we're strengthening ourselves, to present a constant trouble to any enemy that might want to take us on. Just one little fact. We haven't bought enough aircraft in I forget how many years just to meet normal attrition. Those are airplanes that get wrecked, catch on fire and so forth. I think the budget that we're working on now, even with the cuts that have been made, if they don't go too far, we can live with, and we can build a much better defense than we've had. The big thing in our defense going for us now is the change in personnel. We have a very, very fine collection of men and women making up our armed forces, and as long as you have people working under command, equipment is not the major factor.

JONES: Senator, there are reports today that the Air Force is thinking about eliminating some procurement for certain programs and research for others, including the possibility of discontinuing the AWACS, the surveillance plan. Do you think there are major systems that can be eliminated? GOLDWATER: Yes, I think we can go through the military budget and make reductions. I'll give you a quick example. I objected to the price of the AH-64 helicopter last year, and they finally knocked \$2.4 million off the price of the helicopter. That's about an \$800 million saving. Now we can do that. AWACS, we have enough AWACS, in my opinion, to do the work that we have to do. We have the RS-71. I see they want to do away with the new Lockheed replacement for the U-2. That's all right. We have a much better observation aircraft in the SR-71 that you can't hit. I think this is a very, very wise move on the part of the Pentagon. I think it's time. This is one of the reasons that I had asked again the president to come up with a national strategy. We don't have one. I want to have a national strategy so that we can plan how many of these things do we need?

JONES: What's going on then? Is the White House not organized on this? Several times you've said this during the broadcast. GOLDWATER: Well, it comes down really to the Joint Chiefs of Staff telling the president what I've just recited, because every chief you talk to will say, 'We need a national strategy.' Now from a national strategy you get into tactics. Now what are we going to do with tactics you've just been talking about on Central America? The tactic of Cuba?

JONES: Well, who isn't performing here? Is it the joint chiefs? Is it the White House? GOLDWATER: The White House has to determine, has to come up with a strategic statement. Now the president may not like that, but somebody has to put it together so we can have a national strategy just as the Soviets have a national strategy. We have a general strategy in NATO, but we are not equipped now, to get back to the original question of cutting equipment, to be able to say, 'Well, we don't need this many tanks because,' or 'We don't need this many plans because.' It's very difficult for those of us on the Armed Services Committee. Well, I've spent most of my life in and out of the military. It's difficult for me to argue, and especially when you realize today that the great makeup of the Congress has never had a uniform on.

JONES: Have you communicated this to the president? GOLDWATER: Yes, I wrote a letter to him. I thought it was a beautiful letter, but nobody else did. I told him we were in a welfare state, which we are, and we better start palnning how to conduct ourselves, and we needed a national strategy.

DREW: Senator, I'd like to clarify one thing. You said earlier about the size of the military budget that even with the cuts that have been made you think it can be lied with. Does that mean that you think it is the level that the Senate agreed on this week, in other words a 6% real growth increase, as opposed to the 10% increase that the president requested, is enough? GOLDWATER: I would have preferred more money. But I can say as a memeber of the committe that we can find places to cut it that will not raise havoc. We have to.... You know what we have to put up with as well as I do. We have a parochial situation in this country. Last year in my subcommittee on tactical warfare, I said, 'We don't need anymore A-10s. We have 740 of them.' We've never sold one to a foreign.... Well, who tries to put it back in? The senators and congressmen in the districts of the state where it's built. And I finally had to say, 'Who are we fighting, who are we fighting for? The United States or Long Island or Arizona or Timbuktu. Now when we all get together and decide that we will eliminate this weapon system, like John Tower has said, 'I want each senator to write me a letter and tell me what facility they have in their state they don't want.' He didn't get a damn letter.

HERMAN: Senator, I don't treavel around as much as you, but the little traveling I do people say to me, 'What are those people on the Hill doing with this budget? They vote this plan up in the Senate. They vote that plan down. It goes back to committee.' What are you people doing, and does it make any sense? GOLDWATER: I can't answer that question that it doesn't make any sense, and you may ask why didn't I vote. I was the only guy that didn't vote the other night. I have to admit I goofed. I was there from 7:00 in the monring until about midnight and I said to Howard Baker, 'This is the first time I've felt a little bit tired after my operation.' I said, 'Do you need me?' He said, 'No, go home.' So I went home, and I found out the next morning I was the only jasper that wasn't there. Had I been there it would have lost, but you have to keep in mind that this is only a resolution. The president has no veto power over it. I think it's a bad way to raise money. It's a bad way to legislate, and I have a bill that I'm going to introduce, I hope next week, that will do away with the budget process.

JONES: Senator, what do you think of these, this so-called Gang of Five, moderate Republicans in the Senate who are held fast to the argument and did win on the budget resolution, that the deficits are the biggest problem, and they want taxes raised. GOLDWATER: Well, that's their opinion, and while I have probably worried more about deficits than anyone there because I'm one of the few businessmen in the place, the American people want their taxes cut, and frankly the average Amercian couldn't care less about deficits. But if we're going to get this economy going, it's not going to be cutting that deficit. It's going to be releasing more money that people earn to spend to build new factories, buy new equipment and create new jobs. Then we can worry about the deficit. In fact, I think a 20% increase in employment would take the deficit away.

JONES: What's going to happen to those Republicans in 1984 who are quoted for large tax increases? GOLDWATER: I don't think any of them are running. If they are, they're going to have trouble.

DREW: Speaking of running and raising money, are you concerned with the amount of time that members of Congress have to spend raising money for their campaigns?

GOLDWATER: It's absolutely ridiculous. I've been racking my brain to figure out ways that we might cut this money need down. But every time I get going on it, the constitution sticks its head up. I have some ideas that we're working on, my legal staff and I. Not only are they getting too much money to run on, but we have companies now in the very profitable business of raising money, and they keep more money than they give to the candidate. I want to stop that kind of foolishness.

JONES: Senator, do you have any doubts about whether or not Ronald Reagan will seek reelection, and should he? GOLDWATER: I kept saying for years that I didn't think he would, but now I have to say I think he's going to run. And I'll follow that up by saying that he'll beat any Democrat on the board.

HERMAN: What makes you think all of the sudden, what makes you change your mind and think he's going to run? GOLDWATER: I had a conversation the other day with a gentleman from Nevada.

JONES: Mr. Laxalt? GOLDWATER: Something like that.

JONES: Head of the Republican Party? GOLDWATER: Probably the shepherd.

JONES: And what did he say? GOLDWATER: I think that the president's going to run, but I don't know when he'll say anything about it, and if I were the president, I'd keep my mouth shut.

JONES: Did Mr. Laxalt tell you that he was going to run? GOLDWATER: He didn't say so in so many words, but when you get certain questions, you know, and a duck flies by, you've got to think, goddamn, there goes a duck.

HERMAN: Senator, with a minute left, what do you think at this point are going to be the major issues at that campaign that will enable Mr. Reagan, as you say, to win very easily to beat any Democrat? I'll soften that a little. GOLDWATER: I think the major issue, frankly, is that the people like the president's honesty. They may disagree with the things that he does, some of the things that he says, but you cannot point your finger at this man and say that he's not basically honest. And I've found that the American people respect that more than anything else. I remember old Harry Truman. I didn't agree with Harry Truman, but by God you knew where he was when you woke up in the morning. And we haven't had many presidents like that since Eisenhower.

HERMAN: We had one candidate like that named Goldwater. GOLDWATER: Well, I got the hell beat out of me. If I had it to do again, I'd do it the same.

HERMAN: I'm sure. Thank you very much, Sen. Goldwater, for being our guest on Face the Nation.

L'Yana Batts, Transcriber